

# **Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency**

## **Hurricane Sandy Situational Awareness Statement (SAS) #5**

**Date:** October 26, 2012

**Time:** 3:30 PM

### **Situation:**

Hurricane Sandy, currently a Category 1 hurricane, has nearly passed the Bahamas and is projected to move northward off the eastern Florida and Carolina coasts tomorrow into Sunday morning. Current predictions by the National Hurricane Center show Sandy making landfall as a Category 1 hurricane near the Delmarva Peninsula sometime between Monday night and Tuesday morning, but National Weather Service (NWS) advises that a more northerly track for Sandy with a landfall as far north as New York or Connecticut remains very possible.

Given the large geographic size of Sandy, a landfall well south of New England could bring Massachusetts significant impacts including damaging winds, associated power outages, and freshwater and coastal flooding. A landfall closer to New England will bring even greater impacts to the region, with Massachusetts potentially experiencing a historic degree of freshwater and coastal flooding, significant beach erosion, wind damage, and associated widespread power outages. In this scenario, impact from Sandy could be comparable to or even worse than past events such as Tropical Storm Irene, Hurricane Bob, or the 1991 "Perfect Storm".

Potential impacts of Sandy include:

High Seas: Sandy is predicted to cause unusually high seas (25-30 feet or greater) off the coast of New England beginning Sunday and peaking Monday and Tuesday. Seas will be dangerous and potentially life-threatening, even for large vessels. Winds are expected to be at least gale to storm force with occasional hurricane force gusts.

Winds: Damaging winds and associated widespread power outages lasting several days or more are likely if Sandy makes landfall closer to Massachusetts. Wind damage will be exacerbated in southern New England as most trees still have foliage at this time of year. In a worst case scenario, Massachusetts could experience sustained 40-60 mph winds with gusts of 80mph or more.

Coastal Flooding: Both east- and south-facing coasts in southern New England have a high risk of minor to moderate coastal flooding beginning Monday high tide and lasting through Tuesday. Moderate to major coastal flooding (up to 4 to 6 feet of storm surge over and above normal tide levels) and significant beach erosion is possible if Sandy makes landfall closer to New England.

Rain/Flooding: While it is still too soon to determine where the heaviest rain will fall, confidence is rising that southern New England will see potentially flooding rainfall from Sandy. Rain could begin as early as Sunday and potentially last through mid-week. In a worst-case scenario, southern New England could receive as much as 5 to 8 inches or more of sustained rainfall. Areas at particular risk of flooding include the Worcester Hills and the eastern slope of the Berkshires.

The latest 5-day forecast map from the National Hurricane Center is included below.

**State Actions:**

MEMA is actively monitoring the storm and initiating preparedness activities. MEMA held a coordination meeting with state agencies yesterday afternoon. Today, MEMA held its first daily coordination call with local public safety officials and is currently conducting pre-incident planning with public- and private-sector partners, focusing on the following functional areas:

- Commodities
- Debris Management
- Transportation
- Staging
- Mass Care / Shelters
- Search & Rescue
- Communications
- Energy/Utilities
- Rapid Impact Assessment Teams
- Air Operations
- Public Information / Social Media
- Military / Law Enforcement

MEMA will continue to monitor Sandy's progress, hold twice-daily coordination calls with local officials and NWS, and issue additional SASs at least daily until the threat to New England has passed. Depending upon the track of the storm, MEMA anticipates activating the State Emergency Operations Center prior to landfall.

MEMA's Activation Status: MEMA is currently at Level IV (Steady State).

**Information for Local Officials:**

MEMA encourages local officials to monitor Sandy's progress and predicted track closely and undertake preparedness activities such as:

- Reviewing emergency plans and procedures
- Assessing areas that may be subject to flooding and developing plans for communicating with, and potentially evacuating people in these areas
- Updating emergency contact lists
- Testing communications and warning systems
- Reviewing emergency contracts and available resource inventories
- Testing generators and ensuring emergency fuel supplies for them
- Assessing local emergency shelter readiness and capacity.

MEMA also strongly urges local officials to review their Sea, Lake, and Overland Surge from Hurricanes (SLOSH) inundation maps to pre-identify areas particularly at risk from storm surge flooding. SLOSH maps and other hurricane preparedness resources can be found on MEMA's website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/home-sec-emerg-resp/plan-prep/natural-hazards/hurricanes/>. Please note that you will need to have Google Earth installed on your computer to access the online SLOSH maps that are available through MEMA's website.

MEMA has posted a debris clearance and removal guidance document for local officials under the "Hurricane" link on its website at <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/home-sec-emerg-resp/plan-prep/natural-hazards/hurricanes/>.

### **Hurricane Preparedness Tips for the General Public:**

- Stay informed by monitoring the storm via the media.
- Be sure to have a well-stocked Family Disaster Kit in the event you lose power or are isolated for a number of days.
- Clear clogged rain gutters. This storm brings the potential for torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Secure outdoor items such as lawn furniture, trash barrels, hanging plants, toys and awnings that can be broken or picked up by strong winds and potentially become a projectile.
- Elevate articles in your basement that could be damaged from even minor flooding.
- Keep your vehicles fully fuelled.
- Have a certain amount of cash available. If power is lost, ATMs may not be working.

### **Ping4alerts!:**

MEMA encourages smartphone users to download the free ping4alerts! app. This app is available free of charge for iPhone and Android phones and receives severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA based on the user's location. Learn more at <http://www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp>.

### **Online Resources:**

For additional information and resources, visit:

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency at [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema) ([Hurricane preparedness tips and other preparedness information are available through the "Hurricane" link on MEMA's homepage](#)).

MEMA's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA>

MEMA Twitter: [@MassEMA](#)

Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

National Hurricane Center website at [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

National Weather Service/Taunton at [www.weather.gov/boston](http://www.weather.gov/boston)

National Weather Service/Albany, NY at [www.weather.gov/albany](http://www.weather.gov/albany)

Mass211 at [www.mass211.org](http://www.mass211.org)

**National Hurricane Center 5 Day Forecast Map (current as of 2:00PM 10/26/2012):**

